

Department of Mental Health
TRANSMITTAL LETTER

SUBJECT

SSI/SSDI Expedited Benefits Policy

POLICY NUMBER	DATE	TN#
DMH Policy 530.1	September 13, 2002	17

Purpose. To establish the policy and procedures to promote an efficient application and award process for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applications filed on behalf of Department of Mental Health (DMH) consumers.

Applicability. Applies to all SSI and SSDI eligible DMH consumers (hospital and community-based); all mental health providers that provide treatment and care to consumers eligible for or on SSI/SSDI, and the Mental Health Authority (MHA).

Policy Clearance. Reviewed by affected responsible staff and cleared through appropriate MHA offices and DMH leadership committee(s).

Implementation Plans. A plan of action to implement or adhere to a policy must be developed by designated responsible staff. If materials and/or training are required to implement the policy, these requirements must be part of the action plan. Specific staff should be designated to carry out the implementation and program managers are responsible to follow through to ensure compliance. Action plans and completion dates should be sent to the appropriate authority. Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs) must also ensure that contractors are informed of this policy if it is applicable or pertinent to their scope of work. *Implementation of all DMH policies shall begin as soon as possible. Full implementation shall be completed within sixty (60) days after the date of this policy.*

Policy Dissemination and Filing Instructions. Managers/supervisors of DMH and DMH contractors (if it is applicable or pertinent to the contractor's scope of work) must ensure that staff are informed of this policy. Each staff person who maintains policy manuals must promptly file this policy in Volume I of the blue **DMH** Policy and Procedures Manual and contractors must ensure that this policy is maintained in accordance with their internal procedures.

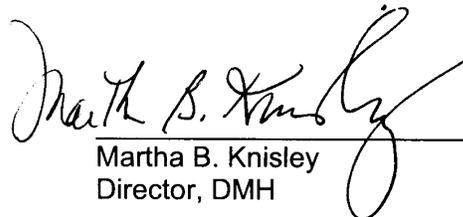
ACTION

REMOVE AND DESTROY

**CMHS 50000.920.3, Preparing
Disability Claim Applications, dated
July 15, 1992**

INSERT

DMH Policy 530.1


Martha B. Knisley
Director, DMH

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH	Policy No. 530.1	Date September 13, 2002	Page 1
	Supersedes CMHS Policy 50000.920.3, Preparing Disability Claim Applications, dated July 15, 1992		

Subject: SSI/SSDI Expedited Benefits Policy

1. **Purpose.** To establish the policy and procedures to promote an efficient application and award process for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applications filed on behalf of Department of Mental Health (DMH) consumers.

2. **Applicability.** Applies to all SSI and SSDI eligible DMH consumers (hospital and community-based); all mental health providers that provide treatment and care to consumers eligible for or on SSI/SSDI, and the Mental Health Authority.

3. **Authority.** Mental Health Service Delivery Reform Act of 2001; Social Security Act of 1935.

4. **Background.** SSI/SSDI programs provide a major source of income for consumers who receive services from DMH. These social security disability programs also provide access to medical benefits under the Medicaid and Medicare programs. The decision process for these benefits from application to award or denial often takes months. The intent of DMH is to work with the Social Security Administration, Disability Determination Division, and mental health providers to reduce the time between application and award without compromising the quality of the decision.

5. **Policy.** It is the policy of DMH that:

5a. consumers' applications for SSI/SSDI be handled in accordance with federal and local governing guidelines and practices;

5b. consumers' applications be expedited at the time of application, and include pertinent medical and other relevant information to support the claim;

5c. all pertinent medical and other related evidence that is required to support a disability claim application is promptly released when requested by another mental health provider who provides a release of information form; and

5d. there is continuous stakeholder communication and evaluation of the process to meet and maintain the stated goal of expediting the SSI/SSDI application process.

6. **Definitions**

6a. **Benefits Liaison Group** – representatives from the Disability Determination Division, Social Security Administration, DMH, and mental health providers who meet to identify and resolve mutual concerns quickly as well as understand each others' role and needs in order to expedite the application and award process.

6b. **Consumer** – adults, children, or youth who seek or receive mental health services or mental health supports funded or regulated by DMH.

6c. **Families** – relatives of consumers.

6d. Mental Health Providers - (a) any individual or entity, public or private, that is licensed or certified by the District of Columbia to provide mental health services or mental health supports, (b) any individual or entity, public or private, that has entered into an agreement with DMH to provide mental health services or mental health supports, or (c) St. Elizabeths Hospital or the D.C. Community Services Agency.

6e. Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) – a federal income maintenance program administered by the Social Security Administration that protects workers and their families from loss of earnings because of retirement, death, or disability.

6f. Stakeholders – for the purpose of this policy, includes Social Security Administration, Disability Determination Division, mental health providers, consumers, families, and DMH.

6g. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – a federal income maintenance program administered by the Social Security Administration for aged, blind, and disabled persons with little or no income or resources.

7. Responsibilities and Procedures.

7a. Mental Health Authority.

- (1) **Promote** an efficient process and procedure that reduces the time between application and disability decision.
- (2) **Facilitate** training by the Disability Determination Division and Social Security Administration for mental health providers to learn SSA requirements and the type of medical evidence necessary to support a decision.
- (3) **Ensure** SSI/SSDI expedited application packets with all accompanying forms are provided to mental health providers.
- (4) **Facilitate** communication between the Disability Determination Division, Social Security Administration, and mental health provider representatives through establishment of a Benefits Liaison Group, in order to early identify and quickly resolve mutual concerns.
- (5) **Evaluate** and **monitor** the process to meet and maintain goals. Benchmark results with other areas.

7b. Mental Health Providers.

- (1) **Determine** if a consumer is eligible to apply for SSI/SSDI.
- (2) **Determine** if a SSI/SSDI eligible consumer has applied for benefits.
 - (a) If the consumer has not applied for benefits, **call** for an appointment at the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.
 - (b) **Submit** a completed SSI/SSDI expedited application benefit package. Ensure the following forms [SSA-3368; SSA-3369; SSA-821; Current Mental Status; Activities of Daily Living; hospital/clinic records; SSA-827; and SSA-1696-U4] are included and completely filled out.

(c) If necessary, **accompany** the consumer to the Social Security Administration appointment and provide the completed application packet.

(3) **Assist** consumer(s) in signing up or applying for other benefits and assistance during the interim period from application to decision.

(4) **Ensure** that a process is in place so that there is coordination of procedures, complete SSI applications, monitoring of applications, and appropriate person(s) to follow-up on problem cases and/or serve as a liaison to the Benefits Liaison Group.

(5) **Ensure** that all inpatient and outpatient medical records are made available to mental health providers for the purpose of expediting the SSI application process.

(6) **Ensure** all staff who are involved in the SSI/SSDI expedited application process receive mandatory and related SSI/SSDI training and continuing education in order to maintain an adequate level of competency.

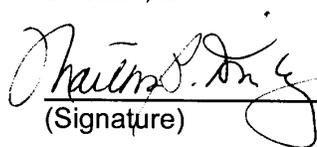
(7) **Follow** steps (1)-(3) for reinstatement of SSI/SSDI benefits if a consumer's benefits were discontinued, notifying SSA that the application is for reinstatement.

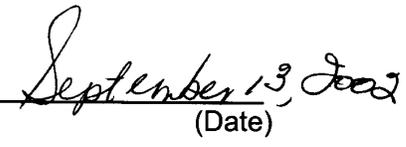
(8) **Provide** any subsequent information requested by the Disability Determination Division to support disability continuation reviews within five (5) working days of request.

8. **Inquiries.** Questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the DMH Office of Consumer and Family Affairs at 202-673-4377.

Approved by:

Martha B. Knisley
Director, DMH


(Signature)


(Date)